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8 February 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Training

THROUGH : C/IS
C/OBF

FROM : [REDACTED] OTR/IS/OBF
Room 1 D 1617 Hqs. Ext. 5941

SUBJECT : Comments on Attached Memorandum (Report on TDY to South Vietnam, [REDACTED], and Laos for the Purpose of Upgrading Training Doctrine, 27 Oct - 8 Dec 66).

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1. Introduction:

Page 13 of this Report contains an evaluation of the Vietnam Orientation and 7 recommendations for change. I don't see much value in either section; but before elaborating, let me note a few statistics:

According to my records [REDACTED] persons received the Orientation since it was established in November 1965. Of these [REDACTED] had done so by the time the writers of this Report were in Vietnam. Of the [REDACTED] persons they interviewed, I can find only 11 among the [REDACTED] just mentioned. The Report does not tell us, even roughly, what percentage of the 11 made either one or both of the specific criticisms listed in the evaluative section. The base, then, for the "appraisal" that is made strikes me as methodologically questionable. Be that as it may, let's consider what it is written.

2. Comments on Evaluation: There are two points to be made:

a. "appraised as being outdated." I forego quibbling about just what is supposed to be outdated. I assume, instead, that an [REDACTED] reaching his post in [REDACTED] was surprised to discover that some things weren't just what he thought he had been led to expect. The fact that the Orientation provided him a few lectures by case officers who had worked in [REDACTED] and who stressed that their experiences were only, could only be, roughly analogous to what he might expect apparently escaped him. If my assumption is ungrounded I can only fall back on the general declaration that speakers in the Orientation have consistently and insistently emphasized that the

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situation in Saigon is dynamic, that change is routine, and that what is up-to-date today will be out of date tomorrow. If a better answer is wanted, I can only refer the questioner to FE Division, which, in the last analysis is responsible for the quality of the information that its personnel disseminate.

b. "conducted by personnel who have no recent up-to-date experience on current operational environment in Vietnam." This is simply not so. I wish to make it clear that each month the cubbyholes of FE are ransacked to find as speakers those most recently returned from Vietnam, most knowledgeable and able to speak reasonably well. Easily 80% of the speakers are such returnees; indeed from what other pool of people in FE can one draw? Indeed I regularly announce at the outset of each class that whereas I personally have never been to Vietnam and am not a specialist on it and serve only as coordinator of the program the great majority of speakers that will appear before them are just that kind of people.

3. Comments on Recommendations:

a. The recommendations suggest "more" of this or that, the inclusion of certain specified subjects, and the addition of other training. When "more" is wanted, I can only say "Amen"; critiques each month always include requests for "more". If the time is given, I will provide it; and I have always tried to lengthen the Orientation.

b. The same comment applies to recommendations for including other subjects. At the same time I must take in consideration the needs of people other than [REDACTED] and reconcile these within the limitations of a 5-day orientation. Also there is often the problem of finding someone qualified to speak on the other subjects of legitimate interest.

c. Some of the recommendations made me wonder whether the questioners and respondents really understand the nature of an orientation and the character of this particular Vietnam Orientation. "Provide training in effective liaison techniques..." prompts such wonderment. So also does "Orientation on Station financial accounting techniques with introduction to accounting formats and requisition forms." So also with "Briefing on Station SOPs and familiarization with the various types of reports case officers are required to write in the field."

d. I see little merit in making any more comments on recommendations, but I'm certainly ready to do so if there is any call for it.

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4. Concluding Remarks

The "felt needs" of men in the field I assume to be legitimate, and speaking for FE and myself I can testify that a continuing effort is made to meet them. However, it is possible that real satisfaction of them will require a radical change in the ground rules for the Orientation. More time will be required, and we would have to make use of non-Agency speakers, both in and out of the government. A few more orientation and training programs will have to be established. I am open to any suggestions along this line.

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